

has been tireless in his efforts in standing up for healthier children in Texas and across America.

Mr. EDWARDS. Madam Speaker, the Children's Health Insurance Program is pro-family and pro-work.

It is pro-family because few things are more important to our families than the health of our children.

It is pro-work because it says to those on welfare, if you will get a job and go to work, you won't lose health care coverage for your children.

This bill is about helping those who are working hard to help themselves and their families, and that is a good thing to do. By passing this bill, we can ensure that 5 million American children will receive better health care. That is a cause worth fighting for, even if we have to step on the toes of some special interests to get it done.

All too often in years past under different leadership, Congress has fought hard for powerful special interests. Today is a new day. We have a chance to stand up for the interests of America's children, and we should do it for the sake of our children and for the future of our country.

Vote "yes" on this rule. Vote "yes" on this bill.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the ranking member on Energy and Commerce, the gentleman from Ennis, Texas (Mr. BARTON).

(Mr. BARTON of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material.)

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Well, progress is being made. Last night, if you mentioned the word "SCHIP" on the House floor, a point of order was made that you couldn't talk about it. At least today we can talk about it.

I rise in the strongest possible opposition to this self-executing, closed rule. I want to just recapitulate the history of the SCHIP bill as it's come through the House and the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Last Tuesday night at 11:36 p.m., after the House had had its last vote, the minority on the Energy and Commerce Committee staff got the 465 SCHIP bill that was scheduled to be marked up the next morning, the following Wednesday, at 10 a.m. So that happened at 11:36 p.m. last Tuesday.

As we all know, last night the Rules Committee got the Ways and Means version of the SCHIP bill, I'm told, at 12:30 a.m. this morning, met at 1 a.m. this morning, reported out a closed, self-executing rule, with no amendments. What does that mean? A self-executing rule means if you pass the rule, everything that's in it automatically happens. There's no debate; there's no policy argument or anything. It just happens.

Now, this is from my friends on the majority side that when they became the majority said there was going to be openness; there was going to be transparency; Rules Committee wasn't

going to meet at midnight; we were going to include the minority in discussions. Such hypocrisy.

11:36 p.m. last Tuesday night we get a bill from over the transom that's 465 pages. Midnight last night, or this morning, Rules Committee meets at 1 o'clock, reports out a self-executing closed rule. That is a joke.

Vote "no" on this rule.

Ms. CASTOR. Madam Speaker, we will stay up day and night to bring better health care to America's children.

At this time, I'm pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS).

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the rule and to express my strong support for the Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act of 2007, which makes great strides in improving our Nation's health care system.

It chills the conscience to think that approximately 9 million American children are currently without health insurance.

There can be no justice until all of our children, our most valuable resource, are granted access to the most technologically advanced medical system in the world.

The CHAMP Act commits \$50 billion to reauthorize and improve SCHIP, our Nation's health care safety net for low-income, uninsured children.

The CHAMP Act would lift enrollment barriers and increase funding so that we can get our children the care that they need.

I'm also very pleased that Chairman DINGELL shares my commitment to improving children's access to dental care by including a guaranteed dental benefit and two other dental-related measures that I have requested in H.R. 3162. Chairman DINGELL also recognizes, as I do, that oral health is an important component for overall health.

With that, I urge the Members to vote for the rule and for the Act.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, if I could inquire upon the time remaining on both sides, please.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 10¼ minutes. The gentlewoman from Florida has 13¼ minutes.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE).

Mr. COBLE. I thank the gentleman.

Madam Speaker, I am in opposition to the proposed tax increase as a source of funding for the SCHIP program.

Tobacco is lawfully grown, marketed and consumed, and tobacco manufacturers to growers, Madam Speaker, employ thousands of citizens in my State, hundreds in my district. These manufacturers and growers, small and large, provide well-paying jobs and make valuable contributions to their communities.

At one time, Madam Speaker, tobacco was king. Now it is a beleaguered industry; yet it remains a convenient

whipping boy regarding the raising of revenue for this body.

When SCHIP was authorized and debated a decade ago, I did not support it because of its potential to become one more entitlement program that would, in time, cost more than what's projected. It has, Madam Speaker, surpassed my apprehensions in cost and scope.

Today, CBO projects that this expansion would cost nearly \$87 billion over the next 5 years. This has led to the proposal that billions of dollars be cut from Medicare providers such as hospitals and health care services, coupled with the increase in the tobacco tax, to finance this expansion.

I cannot condone such an abuse of taxpayers for a program that would take from one group of vulnerable citizens to expand services to citizens, in many instances, who are less vulnerable.

Ms. CASTOR. Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. SUTTON), a voice of clarity and one of the most outspoken advocates for the children of Ohio and all of America's children.

Ms. SUTTON. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me the time and for her leadership on this very, very important issue.

Madam Speaker, today we act to ensure that 11 million children in this Nation will have access to the health care that they need.

With this legislation, we add 5 million more of our most vulnerable citizens to the Children's Health Insurance Program. With this legislation, we will finally ensure coverage for 95 percent of all children in need in this great country.

Our bill, the Children's Health and Medicare Protection, or CHAMP, Act reauthorizes and improves CHIP, while also making important improvements to the Medicare program and changes that will help reduce tobacco use in this Nation.

Children in the State of Ohio stand to benefit tremendously under this bill. The coverage of 218,500 currently enrolled in CHIP will be secured, and funding for the CHAMP Act will allow Ohio to reach another 164,000 children who have remained uninsured until this time.

Expanding and improving health care for our children is one of the most important things we can do to ensure a brighter future for our families and our communities and this country.

If our children do not have access to the health care they need, it affects their schooling, their home life and can have a severe impact on their ability to grow into a strong, well-rounded adult.

Madam Speaker, we hear a lot of purported excuses and lamenting from across the aisle about why we should not act to ensure that the children get the insurance they need here today.

Well, I want those Members to go explain to the families and the children in Ohio's 13th Congressional District,